

Graduation Plan

Master of Science Architecture, Urbanism & Building Sciences



Graduation Plan: All tracks

Submit your Graduation Plan to the Board of Examiners (Examencommissie-BK@tudelft.nl), Mentors and Delegate of the Board of Examiners one week before P2 at the latest.

The graduation plan consists of at least the following data/segments:

Personal information	
Name	Aster Wellerdieck
Student number	4866908

Studio		
Name / Theme	Urban Architecture, Low Town Down Town	
Main mentor	Sam Stalker	Design tutor
Second mentor	Leeke Reinders	Research tutor
Argumentation of choice of the studio	The approach of the studio, of first researching the context in detail, starting from the urban scale and zooming in, instead of starting the design with a set brief, is something that fits my way of designing. I like the realistic approach of working with fieldwork, taking the existing people, ecology and buildings into account.	

Graduation project	
Title of the graduation project	An open system: bridging cultures through inclusive design.

Goal	
Location:	<i>Blikfabriek</i> , on the edge of Hoboken and Kiel, in Antwerp, Belgium. The <i>Blikfabriek</i> is an old can factory that includes the <i>Maakfabriek</i> and the <i>Stelling</i> , workspaces for artists and creators, and the <i>Expo Hall</i> , space for events. Central in the old factory halls is the <i>Cantin</i> , a café. On one hand, the <i>Cantin</i> is an open space, because more than other cafes, the space is open for people without consuming something: when the bar is not open, the space is still used by people to hang out. However, on the other hand, the <i>Cantin</i> is far from the street, and does not have a façade towards the public (very included in other halls). Therefore it is also the opposite of <i>open</i> . My project is situated on the crossing of the <i>Lageweg</i> and the

	Krugerstraat, and includes among others the current Expohall and Skatedepot.
The posed problem,	<p>Interviewing people on the street, we noticed several people mention in Kiel there is a division between native Belgians and people with a migration background. Places like SAAMO and NOVA, social centres in Kiel, are different. People from different cultural backgrounds come together here. SAAMO and NOVA are rooted in the neighbourhood and succeed in connecting people. NOVA is also connecting the residents with lower income to theatre and art. One of the aims of the Blikfabriek is to connect with the neighbours. The Blikfabriek is located in a multicultural neighbourhood. From fieldwork it is concluded that there are some residents that frequent the Blikfabriek, for example large families lacking space in their home, or teenagers that feel they are not judged here, but there are many that do not enter.</p> <p>Sennett (2018) wrote about an open city or system. In an open city, there is a good relationship between the built environment (<i>ville</i>) and the life (<i>cité</i>) in a city, and people manage the complexity of living together with people from different backgrounds. The aim of this research is to find a more context specific method to make a design and the design process more <i>open</i>.</p>
research questions and	<p>How to open up the existing Blikfabriek, through integrating fieldwork and participation into the design process?</p> <p>With subquestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do residents of Kiel and Hoboken with various cultural backgrounds perceive public spaces (i.e. the Blikfabriek, SAAMO, NOVA) in the neighbourhood differently? - How do these perceptions inform the use of these public spaces?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What makes a public space <i>open</i>? - How can participation play a role in designing an open system?
design assignment in which these result.	<p>In the design, I want to implement the research results to make an assemblage of spaces into an open system. In the open system I envision to create interaction between different groups, not to force them to use the same space, but to create an understanding and respect between the different groups.</p> <p>A part of the building is a fourth space, a public space characterized by 'in-betweenness' and can play a role in bringing strangers together, as Aelbrecht (2016) defines this space. This part should be informed by the research results to be open, since this space is a crossing of different flows of people.</p> <p>To create a sense of ownership I want to include the residents in the design process. I want to use participation sessions during the project.</p>
Process	
Method description	
<p>To research how people from various cultural backgrounds perceive and use public spaces in the neighbourhood, I want to make use of different methods.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Walking around the neighbourhood and semi structured interviews with neighbours to get informed on the social spaces and networks. These results were presented at P1. 2. Sitting down at NOVA and SAAMO to have a longer conversation with residents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What place is SAAMO/NOVA? What are key spatial elements or objects? - Find out what is the mental image of the Blikfabriek. Or if they do not know the Blikfabriek, ask them to respond on photos. The results are presented by me through the method of photo annotation. <p>To implement in my design, I want to use the following methods:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Case study of references cities, buildings and spaces that could be regarded as <i>open</i>. 4. Use participation sessions for specific design questions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Public space: The results of the fieldwork research informs an overview of values, needs, opportunities and risks. This needs to translated in design 	

principles to inspire first architectural proposals. These proposals I want to take with me to a codesign workshop with a diverse participation group.

- Housing: The same applies to housing, where the aim is to develop floorplans for different cultures
- 5. **Reflection** on the learnings of the participatory design process, and the implications for open spaces.

In the process of the first and second methods, I'll be expanding my network of residents in the neighbourhood. Building on these connections, the method 4. participation sessions becomes feasible.

Literature and general practical references

Aelbrecht, P. S. (2016). 'Fourth places': the contemporary public settings for informal social interaction among strangers. *Journal Of Urban Design*, 21(1), 124–152. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13574809.2015.1106920>

Hajer, M., Reijndorp, A. (2001). *Op zoek naar nieuw publiek domein*. NAI Uitgevers.

Lefebvre, H. (1991). *The production of space*. Blackwell Publishing.

Lynch, K. (1959). *The image of the city*. The MIT press.

Sennett, R. (2018). *Building and dwelling: Ethics for the city*. Penguin.

Reflection

1. What is the relation between your graduation (project) topic, the studio topic (if applicable), your master track (A,U,BT,LA,MBE), and your master programme (MSc AUBS)?

The site of the Blikfabriek chosen by the Urban Architecture studio, is located in the suburb area of Antwerp, Hoboken and Kiel. It is a multicultural neighbourhood. Blikfabriek draws in new people, by creating space for artists to deploy. A project in-between architecture and urbanism, a building sensitive to its specific context, the built-, as well as the lived context, can be the solution to make an area where people with different backgrounds can live alongside each other respect each other.

2. What is the relevance of your graduation work in the larger social, professional and scientific framework.

This research aims to explore how different cultural groups in Hoboken and Kiel perceive and engage with public spaces. By understanding these diverse experiences, it seeks to inform architectural design processes, offering valuable insights for creating more inclusive and responsive spaces. Unlike traditional urban developments, where final plans are often imposed with limited input from residents, this approach advocates for a more participatory process. A step-by-

step method, where residents are involved in shaping their environment, fosters a stronger sense of belonging and ownership. I believe that integrating such participatory practices can lead to architecture that is not only more meaningful but also more successful in meeting the needs of its users. This research contributes to a broader conversation about how inclusive design can improve urban spaces, making them more adaptable, engaging, and reflective of diverse communities.